

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DACCA 04366 01 OF 02 031057Z

10

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 AID-05 EB-07 IO-10 /100 W

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R 030705Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7978

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 4366

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BT, IN, CH, BG

SUBJ: MOSHTAQUE'S STYLE: CAUTION AND PRAGMATISM

1. OVER THE LAST TEN DAYS, THE SYTLE AND METHOD OF GOVERNING POST-MUJIB BANGLADESH HAVE BECOME MORE APPARENT. THERE IS AN ABSENCE OF CLAMOROUS RHETORIC--A WELCOME RESPITE FROM THE HEADY DAYS OF THE "SECOND REVOLUTION" --AND A RELIANCE ON PRAGMATISM. WHETHER THIS APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE WILL CONTINUE IS ANYBODY'S GUESS BUT THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT REGIME AND THE PERSONALITY OF PRESIDENT MOSHTAQUE, AS WELL AS THE PRESSING NEED TO DEMONSTRATE ACCOMPLISHMENT, WOULD APPEAR TO MILITATE IN FAVOR OF THE LOW-KEY APPROACH EVIDENT TO DATE.

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PAGE 02 DACCA 04366 01 OF 02 031057Z

2. THE DOMESTIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT OVER THE PAST TEN DAYS ARE SEVERAL, AND SUGGEST (A) ITS GROWING CONTROL OVER THE BUREAUCRACY, (B) ITS DESIRE TO CREATE AN IMAGE OF ITSELF AS DECISIVE, SELF-EFFACING, AND COMMITTED TO HONESTY, AND (C) ITS AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO BE SEEN DISPLAYING CONCERN FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES. AS IT HAS GOTTEN ON WITH BUSINESS OF GOVERNING, THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS FORMALLY ABOLISHED MUJIB'S RE-DISTRICTING SCHEME, MADE SEVERAL SENIOR APPOINTMENTS WHICH REVEAL A WILLINGNESS TO DRAW ON RETIRED CIVIL SERVANTS (SOME WHO MAY HAVE LEFT SERVICE PREMATURELY IN THE POST-LIBERATION PERIOD), RESTORED CONFIDENCE AMONG GOVERNMENT SERVANTS BY ABROGATING PRESIDENTIAL ORDER NO. 9 (WHICH PERMITTED THEIR DISCHARGE WITHOUT CAUSE OR APPEAL) (DACCA 4194) AND, IN GENERAL, BEGUN TO RESTORE MOTION TO THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT.

3. DEMONSTRATING ITS REGARD FOR HONEST ADMINISTRATION STILL APPEARS TO BE THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S CHIEF TASK. ALTHOUGH THE MARTIAL LAW REGULATIONS ENABLE MARTIAL LAW TRIBUNALS--ONE-MEMBER SUMMARY MARTIAL LAW COURTS AND THREE-MEMBER SPECIAL MARTIAL LAW COURTS-- TO TRY ANY CRIME UNDER ANY LAW, THE REGULATIONS THEMSELVES SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBE ONLY TWO CLASSES OF OFFENSES: (I) UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF ARMS, AMMUNITION AND EXPLOSIVES, AND (II) CORRUPT ACTS BY PERSONS IN POSITIONS OF PUBLIC TRUST, WHETHER COMMITTED BEFORE OR AFTER IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW (DACCA 4194). WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAD ARRESTED TWENTY-SIX PERSONS ON VARIOUS CHARGES OF CORRUPTION (DACCA 4213). SEVEN OF THE ARRESTED WERE FORMER LEADERS IN GOVERNMENT, AND INCLUDED SYED NAZRUL ISLAM, TAJUDDIN AHMED AND A.H.M. KAMARUZZAMAN WHILE THE REMAINDER WERE A MIXTURE OF LABOR LEADERS, CIVIL SERVANTS, SECOND LEVEL POLITICIANS AND DACCA WARDHEELERS. A FEW MORE ARRESTS HAVE SINCE BEEN MADE, AND MORE ARE ANTICIPATED. IN ITS ZEAL TO DEMONSTRATE ITS DESIRE FOR CLEAN GOVERNMENT (AND PERHAPS TO DEFLECT SUSPICIONS ABOUT SOME PRESENT CABINET MEMBERS), THE NEW REGIME MAY HAVE MOVED SOMEWHAT PRECIPITOUSLY; THE CASE AGAINST TAJUDDIN, AT LEAST, IS REPORTEDLY WEAK AND MAY END UP BASED ON TESTIMONY FROM AN ALLEGED ACCOMPLICE. HOWEVER, IN CONSIDERING FURTHER CASES, FILES CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DACCA 04366 01 OF 02 031057Z

ARE REPORTEDLY BEING CAREFULLY REVIEWED BY A FIVE-MAN ANTI-CORRUPTION CELL IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, CHAIRED BY A STATE MINISTER, WITH THE CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF, THE SECRETARIES OF THE DEFENSE AND LAW MINISTRIES, AND THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION BUREAU AS MEMBERS. MOSHTAQE MAKES THE FINAL DECISION.

4. THE DESIRE TO DISPLAY A MEASURE OF SENSITIVITY TOWARD

CIVIL LIBERTIES MAY STEM FROM TWO SOURCES. FIRST, IT WOULD OFFER A SHARP CONTRAST TO THE TREND TOWARDS TOTALITARIANISM WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE LAST MONTHS OF MUJIB'S RULE. SECONDLY, SINCE MARTIAL LAW PERMITS A GOVERNMENT TO UNDERTAKE SUMMARY ACTIONS AND MAY BE IN EFFECT FOR SOME TIME TO COME, THE GOVERNMENT MAY WISH TO URGE ON BANGALEES THE IDEA THAT ITS AIMS ARE NOT, ULTIMATELY, AUTHORITARIAN. SO FAR, HOWEVER, ITS ACTIONS HAVE BEEN LIMITED ALTHOUGH, AS SYMBOLS, THEY MAY BE EFFECTIVE. THE MOST DRAMATIC ACTION WAS THE RESTORATION TO THEIR OWNERS OF THE TWO BANGLA NEWSPAPERS ITTEFAQ AND SANGBAD (DACCA 4194). ITTEFAQ, KNOWN FOR ITS OBJECTIVE REPORTING AND COMMENT, HAD BEEN PLACED UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL BY MUJIB WHILE SANGBAD, LONG IDENTIFIED WITH THE NAP/MUZAFFAR, WAS SIMPLY CLOSED. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO RELEASED SEVERAL NAP/BHASHANI DETENUS (BUT NONE FROM JSD) AND RESTORED CITIZENSHIP TO NINE BANGALEES LIVING ABROAD WHO HAD PUBLICLY VOICED THEIR OPPOSITION TO MUJIB'S GROWING HOLD ON POWER. THE SCOPE OF THESE ACTS WAS SMALL BUT SUGGEST THE NEW REGIME'S AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO BE SEEN DISPLAYING CONCERN FOR INDIVIDUALS. AND THE ABROGATION OF PRESENTIAL ORDER NO. 9 STRENGTHENS THIS CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, IN SOBERING CONTRAST, THE NEW REGIME'S DECISION TO BAN ALL PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITY, ANNOUNCED AT THE SAME TIME IT (EXPECTEDLY) BANNED MUJIB'S BAKSAL (DACCA 4339), DEMONSTRATES CLEARLY THE LIMITS IT PLACES, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, ON POLITICAL LIBERTIES.

5. INsofar AS THE NEW GOVERNMENTS'S DESIRE TO PROJECT AN IMAGE WHICH IS SELF-EFFACING IS CONCERNED, IT DOUBTLESS LIES IN A DESIRE TO DISTINGUISH ITSELF FROM THE MUJIB ERA. THE QUIET TONE AND AVOIDANCE OF POMP IS IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH THE EXTRAVAGANT AND WELL-ORCHESTRATED DISPLAYS OF THE POST-LIBERATION PERIOD WHICH ENDED ON AUGUST 15.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 DACCA 04366 01 OF 02 031057Z

THERE MAY, HOWEVER, BE AN ADDITIONAL REASON. THE RELATIVE ROLES OF THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE MILITARY ARE STILL IN PROCESS OF DEFINITION. THE CABINET APPEARS TO HAVE LITTLE REAL INFLUENCE, AND ITS CHIEF PURPOSE MAY BE TO MASK THE FACT THAT THE REAL DECISION MARKERS ARE THE PRESIDENT AND THE MILITARY. THERE ARE CONFLICTING REPORTS AS TO HOW DEEPLY THE MILITARY IS INVOLVED IN THE POLICY FORMULATION PROCESS AND AS TO THE ROLE OF THE MIDDLE GRADE OFFICERS, ESPECIALLY IN THE AFTERMATH OF MAJOR GENERAL SHAFIULLAH'S OUSTER (DACCA 4214). WE CONCLUDE THAT BOTH THE PRESIDENT AND THE MILITARY PREFER A LOW PROFILE AS THEY WORK OUT THE WAY IN WHICH BANGLADESM IS TO BE RULED. AND THIS APPROACH MAY BE TO THE TASTE OF BOTH. MOSHTAQUE HAS LITTLE INTEREST IN OSENTATION AND HIS MILITARY BEDFELLOWS DOUBTLESS RECALL THE COSTS WHICH THE PAKISTANI

MILITARY PAID WHEN ITS OUTRIGHT RULE WAS CLIMAXED BY THE
LOSS OF EAST PAKISTAN.

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PAGE 01 DACCA 04366 02 OF 02 031058Z

12

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 IO-10 SAM-01 EB-07 /100 W

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DACCA 4366

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. IF DOMESTIC NEEDS SUGGEST THAT THE TONE AND STYLE OF
GOVERNANCE OBSERVED OVER RECENT DAYS WILL PERSIST, WE WOULD
ANTICIPATE EQUALLY THAT EXTERNAL IMPERATIVES WILL STRENGTHEN
PRESIDENT MOSHTAQUE'S DETERMINATION TO FOLLOW THE BALANCED
FOREIGN POLICY HE DECLARED ON AUGUST 15. THE PRIMARY
FOREIGN RELATIONS ISSUE ARISING OUT OF THE OVERTHROW OF
MUJIB IS RELATIONS WITH INDIA, AFFECTED AS THEY ARE BY
THE NEW--BUT STILL UNDEFINED--RELATIONSHIP WITH PAKISTAN
AND CHINA'S RECOGNITION. INsofar AS THE INDIA-PAKISTAN
EQUATION IS CONCERNED, THERE IS SIGNIFICANT SENTIMENT
FAVORING IMPROVED TIES WITH PAKISTAN. WHATEVER PRESIDENT
MOSHAQUE'S PERSONAL VIEWS MAY BE (AND HE IS NOT THOUGHT

TO BE OVERLY FOND OF INDIA), THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF
MESSAGE BETWEEN PAKISTANI PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO AND
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PAGE 02 DACCA 04366 02 OF 02 031058Z

PRESIDENT MOSHTAQUE (DACCA 4267) AND INDIA RECOGNITION
(DACCA 4327) SUGGEST THE DELICACY INVOLVED IN ACHIEVING
THE APPROPRIATE BALANCE WHICH PERMITS BOTH A STRENGTHENING
OF THE TIE WITH PAKISTAN AND RETENTION OF INDIA'S GOODWILL.
RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN WILL, WE THINK, IMPROVE, BUT THE
BANGLADESHIS WILL NOT WANT IT TO BE AT THE COST OF INDIAN
SUSPICIOUS AND HOSTILITY.

7. THE EFFECT OF CHINA'S RECOGNITION (DACCA 4339) ON
INDIA'S VIEW OF BANGLADESH LIES AHEAD. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE,
HOWEVER, THAT THE PRAGMATISM DEMONSTRATED TO DATE WILL
CONTINUE TO BE EVIDENT. ONE CONSEQUENCE OF CHINESE
RECOGNITION MAY BE WILLINGNESS ON THE PART OF BANGLADESH
TO TREAT SOMEWHAT MORE CONFIDENTLY WITH INDIA, BUT WE
ANTICIPATE THAT EVERY EFFORT WILL CONTINUE TO BE MADE TO
INSURE THAT THE GOI UNDERSTANDS THAT TIES WITH CHINA ARE
NOT DIRECTED AT INDIA. BANGLADESH'S RELATIONS WITH THE
SOVIET UNION, WHICH GENERALLY WILL BE LESS WARM THAN THEY
WERE UNDER MUJIB, WILL DOUBTLESS BE STILL COOLER ONCE THE
CHINESE APPEAR ON THE SCENE. HERE AGAIN, HOWEVER, THE NEW
GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST IN KEEPING A
DECENT RELATIONSHIP WITH MOSCOW AND HAS ALREADY SHOWN ITS
CONCERN FOR SOVIET SENSITIVITIES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, POLITICAL LEADERS, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DACCA04366
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750303-1219
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750886/aaaacxta.tel
Line Count: 255
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOSHTAQUE'S STYLE: CAUTION AND PRAGMATISM
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, BT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006